entitled to grant of an ex-gratia gratuity upto a maximum of Rs. 6000/- on their superannuation at the age of 65 years. Besides benefits under Group Insurance . Scheme to eligible ED Agents also become payable as per terms and conditions laid down by Government.

Orientation Course for Tourists visiting National Parks

2176. SHRI ANANT RAM JAISWAL: SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government propose to start orientation course for tourists visiting National Parks;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any fruitful result is expected out of such courses; and

(d) whether responsibility is to be fixed on persons on duty to ensure proper maintenance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) No, Sir. However, visitor information and interpretation centres have been established in major National Parks and Sanctuaries to educate and orient the visitors for wildlife and nature conservation.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) Staff, including guides, posted in national parks and sanctuaries are responsible for ensuring that tourists follow the prescribed code of conduct inside' these areas. However, effective implementation of these regulations" also requires cooperation and support of the visitors.

Additional funds to central Road Fund

2177. SHRI NARAIN PRASAD GUPTA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any resolution for providing additional funds to the States for the maintenance of roads and development works under Central Road Fund was passed by Parliament;

(b) whether the resolution has since been implemented; and

(c) what are the reasons for. not having any improvement in Central Road Fund in spite of passing of the said resolution?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No; Sir.

(c) The resolution could not be implemented so far due to budgetary constraints.

Afforestation Programme in Darjeeling

2178. SHRI RATNA BAHADUR RAI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the names of tourist ranges brought under the programmes of afforestation in Darjeeling Hills during the last three years;

(b) the Range-wise areas covered under such programmes; and

(c) what was the amount of funds alloted and utilised for such schemes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Negotiations with tenderers by Modern Food Industries Ltd.

2179. SHRI KAILASH NARAIN SARANG:

DR. BAPU KALDATE: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Modern Food Industries Limited, negotiate with the tenderers ignoring the lowest tenderer who has capacity to supply the required quantity and quality of ISI approved products;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) if not, why such negotiations are going on in respect of supply of calcium propionate;

(d) whether such negotiations can lead to favourism and patronage resulting in corruption; and

(e) the opinion of legal experts in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARUN GOGOI): (a) and (b) As per the purchase Manual of Modern Food Industries Ltd., when tenders are invited, contract is to be awarded for supply of goods to the tenderer who quotes the lowest price provided he fulfils the specifications and other terms of the tender. However, if there are sufficient grounds available with the company for not awarding the contract to the lowest tenderer, then after recording those reasons, the company can refuse to award the contract to the lowest tenderer. Thereafter, if the company decides to hold negotiations for these reasons, they would haye to invite all the valid tenderers for negotiations.

(c) and (d) Negotiations are permissible under circumstances prescribed as per the provisions of the Purchase Manual of the Modern Food Industries (I) Ltd. However, no such negotiations for the purchase of calcium propionate, are going on.

(e) As per the legal advice received by the Company, negotiations are to be held with all the qualified and valid tenderers if such negotiations are found to be necessary in the interest of the Company and according to the provisions laid down for this purpose in their Purchase Manual.

Introduction of Will Technology

2180. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have carried out any feasibility studies about the 'Wireless in the Local Loop' technology.

(b) in which countries the WILL has been used on a large scale and the number of subscribers working on the same;

(c) what is the average cost per line for WILL and copper technology respectively for lines upto say 2.4 and 6 km distance from the exchange, in local networks of say one lakh, 20 thousand and one thousand lines capacity; and

(d) whether Government would introduce it on large scale to get over the nagging problems of technical feasibility, improve reliability and avoid frequent digging of roads?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) This technology is being tried in a number of countries. DOT has no information about large scale use of WILL technology.

(c) As the WILL system has not been commercially tried in the network in India the average cost per line for development of this system is not known. However, average cost for 1000 lines capacity trial WILL system ordered by DOT is US $ 1760/- per line. Approximate cost of using copper technology in the network for the distances from 2 kms to 6 kms varies from Rs. 6500/- to 26,000.00 per line depending on type of network, configuration, site etc.